

THE
CONDUCT
OF THE
DISSENTERS
CONSIDERED.

In a Letter to the Bishop of BANGOR.

Wake (Wm)

Nec Vult Panthera domari.



LONDON,

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In a Letter to the Editors of the *Quarterly Review*.



LONDON:
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Considered, &c.

My Lord,



OUR Courage and Firmness in an Interest that most highly concerns our Well-Being, both in this and another World; and the strange Opposition you have met with on that Account, from Persons of more contracted Views, has drawn you into a Station that will, very probably, take up a great Part of your remaining Time, and frequently engage your Thoughts in what may occasionally offer upon those important Topicks of *Religion* and *civil Liberty*. But that Part which you have lately gone into, both in your

Writings and Pleadings in Parliament, with regard to *Dissenters*, is the Cause why the following *Considerations* do press into your particular Attention.

YOUR Lordship cannot be a Stranger to the Suggestions hereupon, which are promoted amongst ignorant and prejudiced Persons, to the disadvantage of your Lordships Character, as a *Prelate* and a *Churchman*; but may not, perhaps, be fully apprised of the great Distance between the Sentiments and Practices of the Persons who most enjoy the Fruits of generous Principles, and those Doctrines of your Lordship, from whence they flow. Your Lordship does not, indeed, directly and professedly plead the *Dissenters* Cause, but they are so necessarily included in the Privileges which naturally flow from your Principles, that they collectively stand highly indebted to your Lordship; they claim you as their Advocate, and they shelter under your Protection. I would therefore hereby endeavour humbly to advertise your Lordship of some Particulars in the *Dissenters* Conduct, by which they forfeit the Benefits your Lordship has so strenuously pleaded for, and the Favours intended them by a late Bill. And I the more rather presume upon this Liberty, because it gives me an Opportunity of rectifying some vulgar Mistakes, touching,

1. THE Motives for this Bill.

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2. **YOUR Lordships Doctrine of Civil Liberty.**

AND a yet further Inducement to offer somewhat to your Lordship upon these Heads, is, That it will, at the same Time, very seasonably, point out,

1. *THE Danger there is, equally, from Enthusiasts of all Denominations.*

2. *THE Agreement there is between the Dissenters, and that Party in the Church, which your Lordship hath always opposed, from several late Instances of their Conduct.*

3. **TOUCHING** the Motives for this Bill; many Persons will have it to be a Tryal of Party Strength, and a Dispute between the Church and the Dissenting Interest; whence the Persons in both Houses on either side the Question about the Bills passing, have been represented and talked of as for or against the Church. Whereas the *National Church*, and the *Dissenting Interest*, have been entirely out of the Case; the former has no Pretensions to be concerned herein, and the latter are regarded only as Subjects, whose Service the Government does, or may want; and because the *Brittish Power* is justly placed at the Head of the *Protestant Interest*, therefore this Bill being designed to add to that Power, has been justly Titled, *A Bill to strengthen the Protestant Religion.* The main
Regard

Regard herein hath been to the Occasion the Government hath for the Service of these Subjects before under Incapacities, and not to any Merit in Competition with Subjects of the National Communion; nor hath Religion, so far as it regards a *Churchman*, or a *Dissenter* in particular, any Concerns herein, but by the malicious Tack of those who would have loaded and obstructed the Bill, and would now bring it into Discredit with the common People.

THE Acts whose Force this Bill has been intended to destroy, passed at a very odd Conjunction, and owed their Existence more to the Frolick and Wantonness of Party, than any real Regards to the Interest of Religion, or of the Nation; this Bill therefore seems to be no more than to take off those Fetters which was laid on in a Time of *Delirium*, when the Constitution was in a Fever, and not duly apprised of its own Exigencies and Necessities. The Nation is now again come to its Senses; a great Part of the Kings Subjects, who are sincere and faithful to his Service, are found shackled and uneasy; the Legislature therefore, very wisely, sets them at Liberty, and eases them, in order, by their additional Services, to add to the Strength of the Government, and thereby encrease the Security of the *Protestant Religion* throughout the World, as it very much depends thereupon: And this particular Engage-
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ment has the Crown of *Great Britain* to be sollicitous for the *Protestant Interest* in general, because the Crown is come upon such an Establishment as can be supported only by that Interest; because a *Popish Power*, in Confederacy with some unnatural Subjects of this Kingdom, is continually attempting to transfer the Succession to a Popish Stock.

THE reciprocal Obligations therefore of the *Government* and the *Protestant Religion* to each other, and their mutual Support, have been the Objects of immediate Concern in this whole Transaction; so that all subordinate Distinctions are mere Figments of the Disaffected, or Delusions of the Ignorant; and to mark the Voters, in both Houses, by the Distinction of being *for*, or *against the Church*, in this Case, is only a traiterous overt-act against the Government, and an incitement to Rebellion.

YOUR Lordships particular Conduct then in this Affair, by no means detracts from your Character as a *good Churchman*, how much soever the Folly, or Ill-Temper of your Enemies may suggest to the contrary; for herein you have acted only the Patriot, and superior to all narrow Views, and Party-Interest, have been determined in your Votes by a more enlarged and generous Concern for the Publick Good. The *Dissenters*, in this Case, come under your Lordships Regard only as Subjects to the Crown, and as
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their Services may be an addition to the Power of the Crown, your Lordships Goodness and Wisdom has had a share in taking off those Bonds which restrained them from such Service; and not in Regard to any Merit in them, in Competition with those Subjects of the National Communion, but with Respect to the Interest of that Government which, under God, is the chief Support of that Religion which your Lordship adorns in one of the highest Stations.

AND here I cannot easily forbear reminding your Lordship of the like Mispresentations which that late Reverend and Learned Prelate, and that Wise Patriot, the late Bishop of Salisbury, lay under on the same Occasion: It is very well known to your Lordship, how strenuous a Defender He was of *Civil Liberty*, and how vigilant in the *Cause of his Country*; on these Motives his Measures in Parliament often favoured the *Dissenters*, insomuch that the popular Prejudice heretofore, frequently gave him the Name of the *Presbyterian Bishop*; and particularly his Pleadings for the *Occasional Conformity Bill*, in his Place in Parliament, so far misled the *Dissenters* themselves, in their Opinion of his Regard for them, as such, that, during the Recess of the House, when the Bishop was at his Country Residence, a great Body of the dissenting Ministers, waited upon his Lordship with an Address

Address of Thanks, for his Services to their Interest, as they imagined that Bill would prove much to their account; but his Lordship soon convinced them, that he acted in that Affair with Regard only to the general Interest of the Nation, and for Political Reasons; and severely reprimanded them for their Obstinacy, in making an unnecessary Division amongst Protestants, by Dissenting from the *National Communion* only for *Things indifferent*. By this downright, honest Declaration, the Bishop ceased afterwards to be a *Presbyterian*, unless amongst such as dealt out that Distinction only as so much Dirt, and Party-Reproach. I hope your Lordships late Zeal for the publick Interest, will not bring upon you any such troublesome Visits, how much so ever your Enemies may maliciously labour to place you in the same Distinction.

BUT your Lordships Treatment, in this Respect, seems uncommonly hard; because you have hitherto been confessedly the best Advocate for the National Establishment in the *Church*; and have wrote the strongest against *Presbytery* of any, ever since those Distinctions have had a Being.

2. A very common Abuse of your Lordships *Doctrine of Liberty*, is the construing of it to the *destruction of all Order and Government*, especially in Ecclesiastical Affairs; which is a Consequence as remote from the

Premises as any thing possibly can be. Your *Doctrine* only throws out, and disclaims all Pretensions of a Religious Nature; or of Commissions, or Schemes from Heaven, to determine such Matters, and Conditions, of *Society* and *Communion*, as are in themselves *indifferent*, and left to the Choice and Determination of all People for themselves; and your Lordship argues only for a Liberty, that leaves every Person to the Direction of his own Understanding, in Matters that cannot possibly concern any but himself, and a Liberty that exempts him from the arbitrary Impositions of unreasonable Men, in Things they have not justly any Authority. And, in this, your Lordship hath acted with the most exact Conformity to the Principles upon which the grand Reformation, from the Impositions of *Rome*, was conducted. And the same Arguments that pass for reasonable with your Lordship, to continue in Separation and Dissention from that *Church*, does justify all manner of Opposition to the same Encroachments, from what Quarter soever they come; but by no means inferring from thence, *That no Laws whatsoever are obligatory, and that Obedience is not due to every Ordinance that is grounded upon Reason and common Consent.*

THUS, because your Lordship hath opposed a Party in the *Church*, that would graft their own Inventions upon a Divine
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Institution, and under the Notion of Discipline, assume an Authority that belongs not to them; your Opposers, either out of Mistake, or Prejudice, will have it, *That your Lordship is against all Church Authority*; and because your political Maxims are destructive of all those Schemes of Government, as break in upon the natural Rights of Mankind, and leave them not the Power to be Free-Agents, in Matters wherein every one is answerable only for himself; your unreasonable Enemies will have it, that your Lordship pleads for Anarchy, Republicism, or any Form of Government that is not Monarchical; for such is the common Practice of misled, and ill-minded Persons, not to represent their Opposers, and those who will not come into their Delusions, as they really are, but as obnoxious and odious as they can invent to paint them.

BY the *former* Abuse of your Meaning, your Lordship comes to be placed at the Head of the *Dissenters* from the *Church*, under the most reproachful and obnoxious Appellations; and by the *latter* Perversion thereof, amongst *Republicans*, and the Enemies of our Constitution; whereas, in reality, your Lordship will appear, amongst all equitable and disinterested Judges, both the *best Church-man*, and the *best Subject*, in that Sense in which our Constitution has at present settled the Signification of those Terms; that is, up-

on the Boundaries of our Obligations, both *Ecclesiastical* and *Civil*: For the same Principles which oppose all Enthusiasts in the *Church*, necessarily guard against those out of the *Church*; and the same Maxims that oppose any unwarrantable Authority in *Civil Government*, will, at the same Time, stand against whatsoever can prove hurtful to the Good of Mankind, and injurious to their natural Liberties, under what Disguise soever it is concealed; and even under the Covert of Religion.

YOUR Lordship stands up against a Party in the Church, because they are *Enthusiasts*, or *Fanaticks*, in the modern Sense of these Terms; That is, false Pretenders to a divine Authority, whereby they impose upon their Brethren, to their great Prejudice; if engrossing the Conditions of Salvation, and Exclusion from the Means of Grace can be so: And your Lordship opposes a Party in the State, because they are for Tyranny; that is, a Power injurious to natural Right, and contrived more to gratify the Lusts, and Ambition of particular Persons, than to advance the common Interest of Mankind. How unreasonable then must it be to shelter under your Doctrines, any Persons of what Denomination soever, that can go into either of these Extrems? If the *Dissenters*, of any sort, maintain Tenets that agree with the former, in the Church,

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your Lordship is equally against them; and whosoever in the *State*, comes under the *latter Distinction*, cannot, by any Means, find their Account in your Maxims of Policy, because they utterly destroy all manner of Schemes that are hurtful to the Subject, or the Persons governed. The *Charity* of a *Christian* is the Measure of your Conduct in the Church; and the *Benevolence* of a *social Being*, is the Motive of your Behaviour and Proceedings in the State. Hereby, therefore, must it appear, that all false Pretenders to Power, whether of a Civil, or Religious Nature, are equally exploded by your Lordships Doctrine.

BUT, in order to make it more fully appear, That the *Dissenters* cannot claim any Protection from your Lordship; nor your Enemies, with any colour of Justice, represent them as drawn up under your Banner; it may be convenient to compare their Principles, and Practices, with those of the Church who are most affected by your Lordships Maxims; because, so far as they agree, ought they to be looked upon in an opposite Interest to that in which your Lordship has been so generously engaged: And this Part I am the more desirous to engage in, because it will, at the same Time, discover how little those People who are obtruded upon your Lordships Patronage, deserve of your Favour; and be of use in apprising the Publick of the equal

equal Danger there is from the *High-Churchman*, and the *Dissenters*; and thereby putting all well-meaning Persons upon a Guard against the Delusions, and mischievous Insinuations and Pretensions of either. For,

1. HOW much soever Party-Strife, and the blind Fury of an enraged Populace may have thrown the Persons thus distinguished, into different and opposite Sides; yet, upon Examination, they will be found not one jot to differ, as they stand related to the State, and as their respective Principles determine their Obedience to a civil Authority.

FOR which purpose, I beg leave to observe to your Lordship, that all those who maintain Notions of Government, that suppose a Right Superior to that which is given by the Community, and founded in Compact, are, with relation to that Power, upon a like Foundation. That is, if any humane Authority establishes Laws by a Right supposed in themselves so to do; all those who pretend to be disengaged from such Obligations, on Pretence of a Superior Direction, are equally to be suspected, how much soever they may differ in other Respects; because whensoever they can reduce their Principles into Practice, they will subvert the Government, and introduce another upon their own Plan. What Power, therefore, the present Establishment of *Great Britain* stands possessed of by humane Authority; that is,

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in our common Language, by Acts of Parliament, all those Persons are equally dangerous unto, who affirm, that Religion has directed any other Form, or hath made it necessary to alter it in any particular Circumstances.

WHAT Troubles both the Parties, under particular Consideration, have given to this Nation, under such Pretences, are not a Secret to any that have been but in the least conversant in the Story of the last Age; deluded rash Men, under very different Appellations, have pushed their *Enthusiastick, Reforming* Notions, too often with success, and the Constitution has been equally treated by the *Good old Cause*, and by *High-Church*. And, to all Intents and Purposes, it is the same, as to the Ends of Government, and a Constitution once established by humane Authority, whether it be attacked by *Hereditary Right*, or by a *Dominion in Grace*, for either Side will overturn it if they can, so far as it is repugnant to their respective Schemes. But,

2. TO draw this nearer to the present Case: Your Lordship has been too sensible how the Nation, and publick Quiet, have been harrassed, with a Party who hath turned all their Politicks for the *Church*, or covered their Designs, at least, with such Pretences. Their particular Notions in Religion, have been made the Standard of Pre-
ferment,

ferment, and Qualification in the State; and we have seen the Civil Power almost wholly devolved into their Hands, to the great Prejudice of others by legal Disqualifications, and the utmost Hazard of the common Interest of the Establishment. And, in this *Calenture of State*, not only *Churchmen* were to engross all Power; but the Qualification also must be raised to Particularities, and Observations, that fitted but few even under that Denomination; insomuch that the very Reformation it self grew out of Countenance; and to be *Highb-Churchman* enough for a Magistrate, it was necessary to go back, not only to the Fopperies of *Rome* in Religion, but to their Spirit of Cruelty and Persecution too, by hating and distressing, as much as possible, all under different Denominations. The Success of such a blessed Administration, is fresh in Memory, and how the Mercies of Providence changed the Prospect, by His Majesty's Accession to the Throne: Since which, utterly to extirpate those pernicious narrow Principles, and to guard against the Evil of them for the future, has been your Lordships generous Care.

BUT because many People, either out of Weakness, or Dissaffection, would represent the Conduct of the present Administration, in destroying the ill Measures that were then taken, as a Favour to an opposite Party, and an Introduction to a *Presbyterian Government*;

Government; it may be of use to convince such, that the true Maxims of Policy hold as strong for keeping *Dissenters* out of too much Power, that is, a Superiority in the State, as they have been for going counter to a *High-Church* Management; and this I presume to do in this Appeal to your Lordship, because you have been so unreasonably represented as a *Favourer of their particular Interests*. Whosoever considers these People with regard to their Religion, and their Behaviour as Christians, will find them very culpable on many Accounts.

THEIR Notions of a *Supreme Being*, and the *rectitude* of his *Attributes*, are very obscure, if they can be reckoned to have any at all, who take things upon Trust, and make *Matters of Demonstration, Points of Faith*. And although they are very ready to call others *Atheists*, yet they have no more to say for the Existence of a God, than the meanest *Heathen*, or the wildest *Indian*; for they place Religion, with its Foundation in the Air, and fetch all those things from the Authority of a Revelation, on which Revelation it self is to be supported. They are so blindly bigotted to every thing upon that Foot, that the very Terms of *natural Religion, Morality, Vertue, &c.* are hateful. *Humane Reason*, and the *Light of Nature* are their Aversion, *Good Sense* is the *biggest Folly*, and *Integrity of Life*, is the Province of a
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Carnal Man. And thus, precipitently, do they throw themselves upon a Revelation, that it is altogether owing to the Accidents of Birth and Education, that they are of the *Christian*, more than any other; for *that* they take into upon Impulse, at the Reading, or Hearing, or Recollecting something about it, on a sudden, whereby their Minds and Dispositions are quite changed; and this they call *Conversion*, and coming under the Influences of *Saving Faith*. A blind continuance in this implicit Assent to somewhat they are by no means to Examine, and exercise their Reason about, is called, *close walking* with, and *relying* upon God. And even so remote is all that they call Religion, from employing the Understanding, and engaging the Faculties of a reasonable Being, that they professedly declare, a Persons Acquaintance therewith, rises in proportion to a Disuse of Them; that the *Gospel* is all *Mystery*; that *Faith* and *Reason* are *Contradictions*; and that a *Christian* is not a *Man*: And I have myself, heard it affirmed, by some of them, that the *greatest Fools* make the *best Preachers*.

THESE contracted Principles taint every Part of their Conduct; and their Friendship, their Commerce, and all the ordinary Inter-courses of Life, have a mischievous Tang of this Leven. As their Abuse of such like Passages, as, *That the Carnal Man discerns not the Things of God, &c.* makes them thus grie-

grievously err in the grand Supports of Religion, so their arrogant Presumptions, touching God's Favour, founded likewise upon an abuse of some Terms of Limitation, frequently to be met with in Scripture, makes them the worst Subjects, and the worst Neighbours. In getting clear of *natural Depravity*, and *original Corruption*, they get loose also from *common Obligations*, and a *Gospel Freedom*, sets them above the reach of *humane Coercion*. They are so swallowed up in a *Spiritual Life*, that *temporal Affairs* are out of their Concerns; and their Possessions in this World, are so much the Gift of God, that a Neighbour, or a Fellow-Citizen, is not upon the Square with them who has any thing in their Possession, which he has not a legal Demand for; being *right* (as they call it) *God-ward*, making them frequently very remiss in Matters of *common Honesty*. Their great Interest likewise with Heaven, and Enthusiastick Transports into *another World*, makes them very unfociable in *this*; they *love God* so much, that they *bate* their Fellow-Creatures; and as Heaven is engrossed by themselves, so Damnation is the Portion of the rest of Mankind. And thus Religion, instead of improving a Man as a reasonable and a social Being, sinks him beneath the Conditions of a Brute. Horrible Perversion!

YET this bad Cause carries its Effects further than in making these People trouble-

some, and justly obnoxious to others, because when they are left at liberty, they fall out with one another too. Their Standards of Orthodoxy, and Terms of Communion, are not only so narrow, as to exclude the greatest Part of the Christian World, but when they have no common Enemy, they also subdivide themselves into Parties and Animosities. Indulgence and good Treatment weakens, but Severity strengthens their Interests and Affections. During the Usurpation, when they were rampant in Ease, they fell out most greivously, and came into the Restoration more out of Spight to, and Jealousy of, one another, than any laudible Motives. The Persecution of King *Charles II.* Reign, again united them; they grew fond of one another in Goals, and began to love again as Brethren, losing all the petty Distinctions which before broke them into Parties; but the Sunshine under King *William*, dissolved all those Bonds of Charity, and, except a few healing Fears, they were put into at the close of Queen *Ann's* Administration, have they been crumbling since into subordinate Distinctions, and sincere Hatred to one another.

Y E T, most to the present Design, is their *Persecuting Temper*, amongst one another. The Narrowness of their Principles, is not only the Cause of their general Defection from the national Communion; but the Mistaking,

mistaking, and substituting Matters Indif-
 ferent in the room of Essentials, makes them
 both refuse Communion with one another,
 as collected into Congregations of different
 Perswasions, and frequently censure, and,
 according to their Discipline, excommunicate
 Members from their own Assemblies; of
 which I beg leave to lay before your Lord-
 ship some recent Instances, because they will
 justify me in this Appeal to your Lordship,
 and, at the same Time, let the Publick see,
 what a Guard they ought to keep upon a
 People who make so ill a Use of that little
 Power they already have.

TO this purpose it is needless to trouble
 your Lordship with any remembrance of
 Times passed by, wherein one Sect has made
 War upon another; or how the two Lectures,
 still continued on *Tuesday* Mornings, at the
 same Hours, at *Salters-Hall* and *Pinners-Hall*,
 by *Presbyterians* and *Independents*, had their
 first Rise from Opposition; but to observe
 only, that since the King's Accession, and the
 removal of their foreign Fears, they are
 drawing out afresh against one another.
 There is already a Lecture employed by one
 Party against another; several Persons,
 in their Turns, at the *Weigh-House* in *East-
 cheap*, every *Friday* Evening, preach against
 the *Baptists*; which hath made that Place,
 every *Lecture-Day*, more like a Field of Bat-
 tle, than a Place of religious Worship; and
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it is common to see Persons come away from thence, extravagantly elated, or strong in Menace and Resentment, according as they have been respectively engaged by Prepossession. Your Lordship cannot but be very sensible of the Mischiefs and Inconveniencies of *Pulpit-Controversies*, when managed by Persons of the best Learning and Candor; but cannot, perhaps, easily conceive what Heats and Animosities may be stirred up when Persons so narrowly principled, as hath been already observed of the *Dissenters*, let themselves loose into such Combats. Where this will End, perhaps, cannot be yet guessed, but it is very natural to believe, that the opposed Party, will find a time for their Defence; and by a parity of Reason, may it be apprehended, that other Denominations will soon draw out to engage in the same Manner. These Bickerings already are stirring in several Countries, and the *Press*, as well as the *Pulpit*, is taking into the Service on all Sides.

AND this same Cause, which brings the several Sects into Enmity to one another, also raises up oftentimes Quarrels in the particular Congregations in each Party. A Dissent in some trifling Particularity, and a *Leaning* (as they call it) never so little from the Standard of Orthodoxy, by any single Member, even if it be the Minister himself, shall be called to Account, and if

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he cannot be brought to believe as the Church does, he is excommunicated; which Excommunication, indeed, goes no further, as to the Regards of this Life, but his Exclusion from that Congregation, yet, if they had Power further to proceed, I believe no one will venture to affirm where they would Stop. In this, they exclude a Person as much as in them lies, from the *means of Grace*, and give him over to *Damnation*; and that they affect not either Person or Estate, may very likely be owing more to their want of *Power*, than out of *Principle*: For, upon such Censures, it is usual to withdraw Friendship, Society, Correspondence, and Dealings from the excommunicated Person, and to deprive him as far as they can of worldly Support: And Instances are to be produced, wherein not only the customary Credit has been refused to such a one in Trade, but where Processes of Law have actually been Commenced, and the Master of a large Family thrown into Goal, as a means of his Conversion, tho' his Family by that means starved. I cannot but therefore presume, that your Lordship will allow a Jealousy of a Persons disposition too well grounded, who will refuse to Trade, and will take all legal Advantages over any one, for not thinking just as he does in Religion: And in several Circumstances taking away a Persons usual Credit,

dit, may be equivalent to the taking from him so much Money, and may be as effectually to his Ruin. And what adds most to the aggravation of this Case is, that the Life and Manners of the Person under such Dealings is by no means regarded; the Heinousness of believing, and thinking wrong, being no ways mitigated by the most sincere Heart, and the most vertuous Life imaginable.

SO that the Proceedings of the *Dissenters*, touching Ecclesiastical Censures, and Excommunication, differ not much, in the Severities intended, from the most uncharitable Church in being. The Thunders of *Geneva* are no better, in the Consequences, than those of *Rome*, tho' they are not so loud at first; and, like what is reported of *White Powder*, they as effectually destroy, tho' not with so much Noise. The Excommunicant that is openly hurried into Prison, and his substance Seized by *holy Robbers*, is in no worse a Condition than he, who has the means of Livelyhood withdrawn from him, but as his is a *sudden*, and the latters a *lingring* Death. And if the Consequence of the *Dissenters* Excommunication, extend not to the Ruin of the Excommunicants, by this means, it is owing to the goodness of Persons better Principled, who continue, notwithstanding, to deal with them as Neighbours, and who, to the just Reproach
of

of such Christianity, give the Preference to Good-works, to Natural Obligations, and the common Ties of Humanity. As for their Condition in a future State, it is the same, being by both consigned over to Damnation, without a recovery from their Errors before Death. It is to be acknowledged, that this manner of Proceeding, has been palliated, and softened of late, and begins to be called *Dismission*, or Advice to withdraw from that Communion, but the Motives for this Relaxation are too well known to allow it any great share of Merit. How far they may excuse themselves, from the Example of such Ecclesiastical Proceedings, as are warranted by Laws, I cannot tell, but this, my Lord, without breach of Charity, may be affirmed, that happy it is for the Subject, that there is an Appeal from them all, and that the Censures of neither the one or the other can do so much Mischief as some would have them.

HOW much some Differences, in Opinion, touching the *Trinity*, has broke in upon Christian Charity amongst all Denominations, and of late into the National Church, has been too obvious to your Lordship; and the *Dissenters*, since this late Security from common Danger, have greatly out done the *Church*, in their Heats and Bitterness on this Account. Several Congregations have not only fallen out with one

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with one another hereupon, so as to censure, excommunicate, &c. but some have even dared to call upon their own *Pastors*, and erect themselves into a *Spiritual Judicature*, to determine upon the Orthodoxy and Soundness of their Belief. Many of the most learned and worthy Persons amongst them, stand now before their own Congregations in this criminal Light, and some have they already rejected, and turned out of their *Pulpits*, for not giving satisfactory Accounts of themselves in this Point. And such a violent Bent have they now suddenly taken, to bring Religion to the old Standard of their *Cree ds*, *Catechisms*, *Confessions of Faith*, &c. that neither *Learning*, *Piety*, or *Argument*, can Skreen any one who stands out in the least Punctilio. Now their grand Rival, and Competitor for Power, *Popery*, is out of their Fears, are they scrambling for the Keys, putting in their Claim to God's Heritage, and erecting themselves into a *Spiritual Dominion*.

IT is certainly strange, my Lord, in the highest Degree, that the very same Persons should be so altered in their private Sentiments, from external Circumstances. These very People have abundance to say for themselves, when pressed by a Majority, or a superior Power, to a Conformity to some religious Matters, and for a Continuance, notwithstanding their non-Compliance, on the same

same Foot, as Subjects, as Fellow-Creatures, and as Fellow-Christians; and yet, when things look favourably upon their Interest, do they readily run into the same Demands of *Conformity*, and will give no manner of Quarter to the *Dissenters*, or *Non-Conformist*. They will plead with the Establishment for *Forbearance*, *Charity*, *Moderation*, &c. upon the Merit of their differing not from them in Essentials, and of being in the same Faith, and yet will have no Mercy, no Indulgence, no Forgiveness, for such as fall off from them in the least Peculiarities, but must proceed to the utmost Rigour of *Censure*, *Exclusion*, *Excommunication*, &c. Nay, at this very Time, my Lord, that they are inveighing, with all the Bitterness and Resentment imaginable, against a *Rector* in the Establishment, for ordering a supposed Heretick out of his *Parish Church*, in the Time of Divine Service, do they the very same thing amongst one another.

THE Reverend Dr. *Sacheverell*, ordered Mr. *Whiston* to go out of the Church, because he was obnoxious, and might therefore, by his Presence, obstruct, or disturb their Devotion. The Reverend Mr. *Bragg*, Pastor of a dissenting Congregation, has cited before them a Member, on a Supposition of his entertaining the same Opinions, and for want of his giving Satisfaction therein, has he excluded him from Communion: And yet,

my Lord, do the same Persons justify the Proceedings of Mr. *Bragg*, who inveigh, with all possible Bitterness against Dr. *Sacheverell*. Mr. *Bragg*'s Congregation must all be of one Mind, must all come up to the same Particularities of Thinking and Believing; Dr. *Sacheverell*'s Church must be open to all who think fit to come in, of what Opinion or Belief soever; Mr. *Bragg* may turn out the *Dissentient* from his Congregation; but Dr. *Sacheverell* may not turn out the *Heretick* from his Church; such glaring Absurdities doe these People run into! Some, perhaps, may excuse this Instance, of Mr. *Bragg*'s Uncharitableness and Severity, within his own Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, by his not excluding any Person from attending the Ministry, but only from the Sacrament; but such may consider, the former is not in his Power, and that he who refuses to commemorate our Saviours Death in Communion with one of the same Faith in Essentials, does, to all Intents and Purposes, as much as in him lies, exclude such a one from all the Priviledges of a Christian, and put him upon a Foot with those of a quite different Religion, or such as have none at all.

FROM all Persons therefore, of the same Principles and Inclinations as Dr. *Sacheverell* and Mr. *Bragg*, may every Man expect the same Treatment, how wide soever some unthinking Persons may set them; with both
there

there is no Quarter for difference in Opinion; and whatsoever Power either can get into their Hands, will they both equally make use of, to the Prejudice and Oppression of those who think otherwise; and will, as far as they can, engross to themselves, in their several Ways, the Means of Salvation hereafter, and of Subsistence here, and, as much as possible, deprive their Fellow-Creatures of Happiness in this World, and in the next.

AND not only do the *Dissenters* now give repeated Instances of Uncharitableness, and Lording it over Mens Consciences, in their Dealings with those who happen to differ from them in Opinion, but in their ordinary Preachings, and Controversies, do they discover, not only a Zeal without Knowledge, but, that which is much worse, a Zeal without Charity, and the common Regards of Decency and Manners. This heavy Charge, my Lord, I trust to be justified in, by all who look over many of their late Writings; and, in particular, of that celebrated Preacher amongst them, Mr. *Tho. Bradbury*. That Mans Auditories are crouded with *Party-Christians*, who are more pleased with a satyrical Flirt at some great Man in the *Church*, or *State*, that is in their Prejudice, than with any pressing Importunities to a *holy Life*; and who had rather hear some high-seasoned Invectives against a *Party* in the *State*, than
well

well-mannaged Arguments against the *Enemies* of our *Religion*; so that he trains up more *Politicians* than *Christians*, and fills People more with a Disposition to *Fight*, than to *Pray*, or to do any other work of Piety.

IT may, perhaps, be excused, that this manner of Preaching is calculated only for particular Days, the Occasion of whose observation naturally leads to political Subjects; and because the same Occasions are made use of by those who are disaffected to the present Government, in the same manner, for contrary purposes; and that because Mr. *Milbourn*, endeavour'd every 30th of *January* to seduce ignorant People, and prejudice them against the Government, Mr. *Bradbury*, on the 5th of *November*, is willing to set them to rights again, and fix their Affections to his Majesty's Interest. But, my Lord, I humbly conceive this is sufficient; and I would endeavour only to shew they are equally Blameable, and ought to be looked upon with the same Eye by the Government, however opposite they may seem to be with relation to its Interest. A Scurrilous Invective on the 30th of *Jan.* no ways excuses another on the 5th of *Nov.* tho it is too well known, how often under this Pretence all manner of Regard to things divine and humane, hath annually been broke in upon; how the sacred History hath been ransacked, turned, and perverted,

ted, for the Gingle only of a Parallel, or a Jest, and how the inspired Text hath been made a Vehicle for Scandal and ill Manners. A worthy accomplishment in a Divine, to call Names in Scripture Language !

BUT I will trouble your Lordship only with one Instance more of this unfair, violent, overbearing way of Controversy among the *Dissenters*, and that is the more remarkable, on account of the Character of the Person whom it concerns, because he stands foremost amongst them as a Scholar, and a well-bred Man: And this, my Lord, I shall do in the Words of a Person who was nearest affected by this Gentlemans ill usage, so as to have occasion publickly to complain of it. I cannot say, but Mr. *Martin* has
 ‘ Written with Decency, and the Civility
 ‘ of a Gentleman; but such Treatment must
 ‘ not, it seems, be expected from all. For
 ‘ from the *Pulpit*, at a publick Lecture of
 ‘ *Dissenters*, I have been very lately attack’d
 ‘ with heavy Censures, and angry Reproach-
 ‘ es, in order to Vindicate ——— It seems
 ‘ that Dr. C ——— on the 13th Inst. thought
 ‘ it the best Method to begin with Mens
 ‘ *Characters*, rather than with their Argu-
 ‘ guments, and in effect to tell his People,
 ‘ that very good Men had been for ———
 ‘ and some very bad and indifferent ones
 ‘ against ——— And then he descended to
 ‘ Particulars, viz. Mr. *Le Clerk*, Mr. *Whiston*,
 and

and *F. Simon*, as the chief of the opposite
 side, who, for Piety and Learning, were
 not to compare with some of the other;
 tho' they are well known to be Men of
 superior Abilities, and singular Learning,
 of whom, if on his side, perhaps, he would
 have boasted with as great Glory. As to
 my self, I only complain, that it was not
 very Charitable in him, to say from the
 Pulpit, " That tho' it is true, the *Text* is
 not in the *Alexandrian* or *Vatican* Copies,
 yet that I (under the Name of the Au-
 thor of the Enquiry) had such an Aver-
 sion to that Doctrine, that if the Text had
 been in those Copies, and twenty more,
 he believed I would cavil against it still;
 and insinuated to the People, as if I had
 attempted to *Huff* and *Hector* them out
 of the Text. " — It may be observed,
 how ready some are to inflame their People
 with Indignation, and Rage against such
 as differ from them. — We know what
 the marking Men out in the Pulpit with
 odious Censures serves to. I am sorry, if
 these are some of the first Fruits of the
 kind Indulgence granted, viz. to fall
 foul upon others, even before ~~that~~ was
 quite finished. I suppose to Censure, and
 lessen by Name, or Mark, is a Liberty
 which the kindest Laws never intended:
 When these provided that *Dissenters* should
 not be disturbed by others, it was suppo-
 sed

fed that others should not be affronted by
 Personal open Reflections from them.
 This my Lord, you will find to be part of Mr.
Emlyn's Defence of himself, in a Preface to
 a late Tract, against the ill Treatment put
 upon him by Dr. *Calamy* at *Salter's-Hall*,
 in a Dispute about the Authority of the
 Text. *There are three, &c.*

THIS Mr. *Emlyn*, my Lord, has the Cha-
 racter of a well-temper'd, honest Man;
 but because he happens to differ in some
 Matters from the Orthodox Rulers, your
 Lordship hereby sees in what manner they
 have treated him. But he is far from being
 a single Instance of this unchristian and un-
 manly usage among the *Dissenters*; there
 are many pious, learned, worthy Persons,
 who have been Educated on purpose for
 their Service in the Ministry, that have
 been either discouraged by their Arbitrary,
 and narrow Impositions from entering into
 that Office amongst them, or have been soon
 again forced out of it, by their forward and
 severe Censures upon the Soundness, or
 Unsoundness (as they affect to call it) of
 their Opinions and Doctrines; so that unless
 a Man can prostitute his Honour, his Con-
 science, his Liberty, and all that is most
 dear to a reasonable Being, he has a very
 little better Prospect than starving in their
 Service.

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THUS

THUS, my Lord, with great Freedom, but with all possible Submission and Deference to your high Character and great Judgment, have I presumed upon this publick Appeal, in order to convince the mistaken, that no Person whatsoever can have any Claim from your Lordship's Doctrine of Liberty, or to the Indulgence and Confidence of a Generous, Wise Government, but upon the Foot of being *Reasonable in Religion, and Social in Life*; that Enthusiasts of all kinds are equally dangerous to humane Establishments, and that *Dissenters*, as such, are no more to be trusted with Power, than *High-Church, Papists*, or Persons of any other Denomination, who maintain an Authority superior, or foreign, to what is lodged in every Community for its own Regulation.

I am too well acquainted with the Temper of the Party, most affected hereby, to be insensible of the Treatment this will meet with; as therefore I have presumed to make this Appeal, so likewise I beg, under the same great Name, to protest that there is no other Intention herein, but for a Publick Good, and that it may contribute to an amendment of the Faults complained of. Many of the *Dissenters*, it is hoped, are of more generous and reasonable Principles; of such it is therefore wished, that they would

would take more Pains to reform their Brethren, or come out from amongst them, than inveigh against any Injustice, in charging upon a Party what is true, perhaps only in some of them. And this, my Lord, I have to say, for the Sincerity of my Protest; that although I have long thought they highly wanted such a publick Reproof, yet my Regard to the general Interest, has been the sole Reason why they had not this, before a Publick Bill in their Favour was secured, for Fear of giving any Obstructions thereunto.

AND now that Bill hath eased them of a great deal of their Grievances, and, in some Measure, put them upon a Foot with their Fellow-Subjects to Serve the Government, it is earnestly wished, that they would Behave in such a manner towards one another, as may give the Government Confidence enough to Trust, and Employ them; For this has only opened a Way for their Service, but it must be their Merit that lets them into it; and without *That*, they are but where they were before the passing this Act. All that concerns them, as of any particular Perswasions, and as *Dissenters*, is out of the Case, touching the Motives for this Liberty; and it is their Conduct as Men, Neighbours, and Christians, which must recommend them to the Services of a
Government,

(34)

Government, that is manifestly and solely
turned for the Good of Mankind, and for
making *free* and *reasonable Beings* easy, both
in their Enjoyments of this Life, and in
their Prospects of another.

I am,

my LORD,



Your most humble, &c.

